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IOM SERVICES IN MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT FACILITATION

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INTRODUCTION

1. Governments around the world are looking for orderly and humane approaches to the management of migration, whether to address labour market needs, to facilitate family reunion, to ensure the protection of refugees, to minimize the risks and dangers of smugglers and traffickers, or to maximize the development potential of migration. As a result, the services that can be offered to governments by an organization such as IOM under its various programmes are of growing interest. IOM programmes aim to facilitate orderly migration, and range from assisting governments in developing systems of managed migration to helping persons in emergency situations. This document, however, focuses specifically on the assistance that IOM offers under its programmes for refugee resettlement, permanent immigration and temporary labour migration.

2. IOM's expertise has been gained from experience developed in a range of migration facilitation activities worldwide and can provide benefits for both individuals and governments. For the individual migrant or refugee, IOM involvement can reduce the risks of disruptions during the migration process and promote successful integration upon arrival. For governments which may be considering new programmes or reviewing existing ones, IOM expertise can facilitate the attainment of programme goals.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3. IOM has provided migration facilitation services throughout its history. The types of assistance have remained remarkably similar since IOM's founding in 1951, indicating that certain basics of migration programmes remain constant. Under orderly migration programmes, there is always an application phase, an approval phase and a travel and integration phase: people seeking a new life in another country need to apply to government programmes, governmental agencies need to approve them, and the migrants need to travel and settle into life in their new country.

4. What has varied is the extent to which governments develop and implement programmes for facilitated migration and the degree to which they look to the Organization's services to help this process occur smoothly. There are certain current trends in migration that are impacting on such migration programmes, making it likely that interest in IOM facilitation services will increase. These trends include:

- shortages of labour resulting in increased demand for temporary labour migration programmes;
- an increasing number of countries accepting refugees for resettlement;
- ageing populations, leading to programmes directed at changing population and age structures;
- heightened security concerns, leading to increased attention to ensuring programme integrity.

5. Through a combination of the processing services outlined below, IOM is well-positioned to assist governments in efficiently meeting emerging migration needs while at the same time helping refugees and migrants through a process vital to their future.

FACILITATION SERVICES

6. The services outlined in this document are those that IOM offers in programmes of organized, regular migration, facilitating an existing process and making it easier, more efficient, more predictable and reliable, and more secure for both the migrants and the governments concerned. IOM services, tailored to each programme, are provided during all stages of the process: information and application, interview and approval, and post-approval.

INFORMATION AND APPLICATION

Information

7. Potential migrants need to know about migration opportunities and to make an informed decision to apply. IOM can conduct information campaigns (for example, IOM assists in the recruitment in the Philippines of skilled migrants to Canada) and set up information centres (for example, in Albania, the IOM Migration Assistance Centre provides not only forms, but is also staffed to answer questions from potential migrants). Those wishing to migrate thus obtain accurate information and impartial advice, while embassies and consulates experience reduced levels of enquiries and visitors.

Case identification/registration

8. Governments may need cases identified and registered for their programmes, according to the criteria established. IOM can set up a system and database to enable further processing. (In Moscow, Baku-Armenians interested in the United States Refugee Program (USRP) apply directly to IOM where they are registered.) This allows governments to efficiently access those cases in a given population which are most likely to meet programme criteria.

Assessment

9. Migrants who have identified migration possibilities for themselves may not be sure if they qualify. IOM can provide an unbiased assessment of their qualifications *vis-à-vis* programme requirements. (In Ukraine and the Russian Federation, applicants for migration to Canada can be assessed quickly at the IOM Office.) Potential migrants are able to obtain professional advice for a reasonable fee, while governments benefit from enhanced efficiency and reliability, as those with no possibility to succeed in their applications do not apply.

Case preparation

10. Refugees who have been identified by the UNHCR or governments for refugee resettlement require assistance in ensuring that all processing requirements are met. (In Colombia and the Syrian Arab Republic, the IOM Offices ensure that case files for refugees being presented for approval to the United States are fully and accurately completed.) Refugees are able to receive professional and sympathetic assistance in complying with the requirements of government programmes, and governments can benefit from enhanced efficiency and reliability as officials are able to focus on questions of eligibility, rather than the mechanics of ensuring that applications are completed correctly.

Application assistance

11. Some migrants need assistance in completing the required forms and understanding the documentation requirements that support their applications. (In El Salvador, IOM assists applicants for migration to Australia to submit a correctly-completed application with all the documents required.) Having applications correctly completed avoids multiple trips to the visa office, multiple reviews of the file, etc., thus saving time and money for all concerned.

INTERVIEW AND APPROVAL

Verification

12. Information on a migrant's application must occasionally be verified before the application can be approved. IOM Offices can provide this service, particularly where the government concerned has no representation, or the use of existing channels results in delays. (In Zimbabwe and Bangladesh, IOM verifies details of employment or education on behalf of the New Zealand authorities processing immigrant applications. In Ethiopia, IOM facilitates DNA testing for Somalis applying to join family members in Italy.) Governments reviewing applications have a professional resource available to verify information that allows those applications to be processed efficiently, while migrants obtain more rapid decisions on their applications.

Logistics assistance

13. Governments who need to interview applicants for one of their programmes may not always be able to benefit from on-site logistics assistance from their own officials. With IOM's worldwide network of offices, arrangements for such interview missions (lodging, transport, translators, office space, etc.) can be made efficiently and cost-effectively. (In Viet Nam, IOM arranges interview trips for Japanese teams.) Governments benefit from having arrangements for interview missions made quickly through an office with local knowledge.

Skills testing

14. Some migration programmes require that applicants have skills at a certain level. When governments themselves have insufficient possibilities to administer the necessary tests in a controlled environment, IOM can organize tests in a way that meets government programme

requirements. (In Albania, IOM tests skills, including language, for migrants wishing to work in Italy.) Governments have an additional resource for having tests administered in a secure and reliable fashion.

POST-APPROVAL SERVICES

Health assessments

15. Many governments require that migrants and refugees have their health assessed, and some conditions treated, in order to protect the public health or avoid a burden on the health-care system of the country of destination. While private physicians provide this service in some places, IOM has an increasing capacity to carry out these assessments with appropriate counselling while ensuring quality control. (In 2001, IOM provided these services to nearly 76,000 migrants and refugees in over 30 countries, bound for eight countries of destination.) Governments are assured that assessments are in line with requirements, with appropriate quality and procedural control, and have a global service provider to facilitate oversight. Refugees and migrants benefit from respectful and appropriate attention.

Orientation

16. Refugees and migrants often have a limited and distorted picture of what to expect on arrival in their new country. Information about life in that new country, delivered before their departure, can facilitate adjustment. IOM has the capacity to deliver courses that provide such information in a cross-culturally sensitive way (cultural orientation is delivered to refugees in Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran going to Finland). This allows refugees and migrants to arrive with a clearer understanding of the challenges to be faced, while at the same time governments are certain that the information is delivered accurately and in a cross-culturally sensitive manner.

Travel and Transit Assistance

17. Refugees generally have no funds to pay for travel to their resettlement country. Migrants may welcome IOM's low fares and be reassured by IOM assistance throughout their travel, including at transit points. IOM organizes refugee travel on behalf of governments and UNHCR, and offers migrants an alternative for their travel. (In 2001, IOM provided travel assistance in programmes of immigration and resettlement to 21 countries of destination.) Refugees have all travel needs met, and governments are assured that refugee travel will be handled in a humane and organized way at low fares. Migrants are able to access the same low fares and higher baggage allowances, and thus have additional funds available for settling in.

Reception

18. Arrival in a new country is a confusing, even intimidating, experience. Having access to reception services can ease the concerns of the migrants and assure governments that entry formalities will be efficiently handled by a dedicated staff. (IOM Offices in the United States meet arriving refugees.) This service reduces the anxiety level of refugees, migrants and their sponsors,

by ensuring that potential problems on arrival can be dealt with, and assures governments of smooth processing through entry formalities.

OVERALL ADVANTAGES OF IOM SERVICES

19. IOM services can not only be adapted to programme requirements and combined in a variety of ways to provide seamless assistance throughout the entire process, but such services also bring additional overall benefits:

- the Organization and its staff have **expertise** in all phases of refugee and immigrant processing outlined above;
- IOM's **network of Offices**, currently 138 in 102 countries, provides a broad-based platform from which services can be delivered;
- the expertise and global reach combine to result in **cost-effective** services, delivered from an existing base which expands and contracts with programmes;
- IOM, as a **humanitarian** organization, ensures conformity with applicable international standards and delivers its services with understanding for the migrants' situation and care for their needs;
- IOM's ability to deliver a "seamless service", covering all phases of processing, promotes **reliability** and **efficiency**;
- IOM recognizes that programmes vary, and has the capacity to **adapt** its services to the needs of those programmes;
- the Organization understands the need for **security** of information, to protect both the migrant and programme integrity.

CONCLUSION

20. IOM has the network of Offices and the expertise to deliver to migrants, refugees, and governments efficient, cost-effective services in organized migration programmes. By taking advantage of these services, governments are able to make the best use of scarce resources, ensure that programme requirements are met, and provide migrants with caring services at a reasonable cost.

21. IOM will work with governments on a continuing basis to identify where programme needs exist that IOM could productively fulfil.